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DP

COUNTRY

Guatemala

REPORT NO.

CS-38807

SUBJECT

Arrival of Arms in Puerto Barrios,
Guatemala

DATE DISTR.

21 May 1954

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DATE OF INFO. 15 - 18 May 1954

REQUIREMENT NO.

RD

PLACE ACQUIRED Guatemala, Guatemala City
(15 - 18 May 1954)

REFERENCES

BV CABLE

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

SOURCE: Individual with contacts in transportation circles (F). Appraisal of Content: 2.

THE FOLLOWING REPORT WAS PREVIOUSLY
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CS PD 035

1. The SS ~~ALFHEM~~, of Swedish registry, arrived at Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, on 15 May 1954. Col. Jose Angel ~~SANCHEZ~~, Guatemalan Minister of Defense, supervised the docking and unloading of the cargo, believed to be 2,000 tons of armament consigned to the Guatemalan Government. Unloading of the cargo on to trains was delayed because each container had to be weighed to determine freight charges, as there was no manifest showing the weight of each crate. ~~SANCHEZ~~ gave a written order to officials of the International Railways of Central America (IRCA) that they must handle the freight despite the fact that the Guatemalan Government has outstanding debts for previous freight shipments.
2. It was estimated that 8 to 10 trains would be needed to carry the cargo to Guatemala City. On 16 May 7 flatcars and 3 boxcars ordered by the Guatemalan Government departed from Puerto Barrios for Guatemala City. The flatcars carried large crates believed to contain heavy field pieces. The crates measured 3' x 6' at the base, 9' high, with round tops about 18" in diameter. One side of each crate is perpendicular; the other side is sloped like a pyramid. Each crate weighs 785 pounds and has a diamond-shaped mark on one side. This train, scheduled to arrive at the destination between 1700 and 1800 hours on 17 May, was unloaded immediately upon arrival at La Gerona. The crates were believed to have been taken by Army trucks to Base Militar. Ten boxcars arrived from Puerto Barrios in Guatemala City at 2000 hours on 17 May. A train of six cars arrived in the capital

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CS - 38807

from Puerto Barrios at 1500 hours on 18 May. Another train, pulling an unknown numbers of cars, departed from Puerto Barrios at 1830 hours on 18 May.

3. The unloading of the ALFHEM is estimated to take a minimum of seven days, despite SANCHEZ's efforts to speed up operations. Although the cargo is believed to be arms and ammunition, the ship's crew is not taking the precautions usually taken with ammunitions shipments.
4. Seamen on the ALFHEM reported that a second ship, whose name may begin with the letter T, is due to leave Szczecin, Poland, for Puerto Barrios about the time the ALFHEM leaves Puerto Barrios. A third ship will leave Szczecin after the second ship returns there, which may indicate that the third ship will be the ALFHEM.
5. SANCHEZ, Alfonso MARTINEZ,¹ head of the Guatemalan National Agrarian Department, and Col. BARZANALLANA, accompanied by bodyguards and aides, have remained in Puerto Barrios at the Hotel del Norte since the arrival of the ALFHEM. Within the past week additional Guatemalan troops have been flown into Puerto Barrios.
6. The ALFHEM reportedly is owned by the Thorden Line and is registered in Uddevalla, Sweden. The company manager is Captain Knud Nordendorph.

1. Washington Comment. See CS-29982. It is possible that the armament cargo described in the above report was negotiated by Alfonso MARTINEZ on his trip to Europe in January 1954.

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